

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please amend Claims 11, 23 and 31. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

**Claim Listing:**

1. (Previously Amended) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:
- assigning a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
  - scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:
- adding a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the steps of:
- extracting a user identifier from the received network management request; and
  - determining the priority value by using the extracted user identifier to index the authentication table.

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6. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 5 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:  
selecting the order of execution of the network management request dependent on the determined priority value.
7. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:  
preempting the currently executing task if the determined value for the management request is higher than the currently executing task.
8. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:  
adding the management request to the end of a request queue if the determined priority is lower than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
9. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:  
adding the management request to the front of a request queue if the determined priority is higher than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in Claim ~~10~~ 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:  
selecting the order of execution of the network management request dependent on the determined priority value.
12. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
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preempting a currently executing task if the determined value for the management request is higher than the currently executing task

13. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:  
adding the management request to the bottom of a request queue if the determined priority is lower than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
14. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:  
adding the management request to the top of a request queue if the determined priority is higher than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
- 15 - 17 (Cancelled)
18. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:  
a priority assignment routine which assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and  
a network management request routine which schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Previously Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 18 wherein the priority assignment routine further comprises:  
a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

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21. (Previously Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the network management routine further comprises:
- a user identification extraction routine which extracts a user identifier from the network management request; and
  - a priority value extraction routine which determines the priority value by using the extracted user identifier to index the authentication table.
22. (Cancelled)
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23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim ~~22~~ 18 wherein the network management routine further comprises:
- a source identification extraction routine which extracts the user identifier from the network management request; and
  - a priority value determination routine which determines the priority value using the extracted user identifier to index the source identification table.
- 24 - 26.(Cancelled).
27. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:
- a priority assignment routine;
  - a network management request scheduler;
  - means, within the priority assignment routine, for assigning a priority value to the network management request received from the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the network management request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
  - means, within the network management request scheduler, for scheduling the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

28. (Previously Amended) A computer program product for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:

assigns a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of the application from which the request was sent; and

schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

29. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a message requesting information stored in a managed element, the message being sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the message received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 29 wherein the message is in the form of a Simple Network Management Request.

31. (Currently Amended) A method for prioritizing a Simple Network Management Protocol message sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the Simple Network Management Protocol message received by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request message, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request message was sent; and

scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

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32. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:

assigning a priority value to the network management request received by the managed element dependent upon a source identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the source identifier identifying the source of an application from which the request was sent; and

EX scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to the source identifier in a source identification table.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 33 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:

extracting the source identifier from the network management request; and

determining the priority value by using the extracted source identifier to index the source identification table.

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